

Remarks

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested.

Upon entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 1-16, 23, and 24 are pending in the application, with claims 1 and 9 being the independent claims. Claims 17-22, 25, and 26 are sought to be cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter therein. These changes are believed to introduce no new matter, and their entry is respectfully requested.

Based on the above amendment and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Objection to the Specification

The specification was objected to because "the status of the related applications on pages 1-2 should be updated." (Office Action, pg. 2). Applicants have amended the specification to update the status of the pending applications. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

Obviousness-Type Double Patenting Rejection

In the Office Action, claims 1-16 and 23-24 were rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-53 of U.S. Patent No. 6,389,434.

Applicants are submitting a Terminal Disclaimer concurrently herewith to overcome the double patenting rejection. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection.

Request for Clarification

In the Office Action, the Examiner stated that "claims 17-22 withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b) as being drawn to a nonelected invention." (Office Action, pg. 2). However, the Office Action Summary indicates that claims 17-22, 25, and 26 were withdrawn from consideration. Applicants will assume that the statement on page 2 of the Office Action was a clerical error by the Examiner and that he intended to withdraw claims 17-22, 25, and 26 from consideration. If this assumption is incorrect, Applicants request that the Examiner issue a corrected non-final Office Action resetting the date for response.

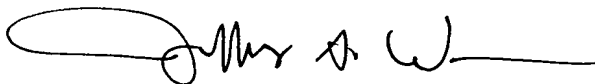
Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

STERNE, KESSLER, GOLDSTEIN & FOX P.L.L.C.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey S. Weaver", with a large, stylized initial "J" and a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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